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ABSTRACT

A survey of 185 teachers and administrators in Chicago indicated some differences of opinion on a ruling that teachers must reside in the city. Minorities (blacks and Latinos) and those who lived in the city favored the residency ruling. These responses could be influenced by economic and social concerns. Teachers who lived in the suburbs (majority of whom were white) were against the ruling. All groups believed the ruling to be unconstitutional, restrictive, and a violation of their civil rights. (JD)

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TEACHERS' OPINION OF THE CITY RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

by

Earl J. Ogletree

The Supreme Court ruling that cities have the power to require public employees to live within city limits is being enforced by local governments. In Chicago, firemen, policemen and city hall workers have been given the ultimatum: "Live in the city or lose your job." Chicago teachers have not as yet been or will be affected by the city ordinance for several reasons: 1) Chicago teacher's salaries are paid by the state and the city, they could be considered state as well as city employees, and 2) there is resistance to the ruling by the Chicago Teachers Union.*

There are rational arguments for and against the residency ruling issue. It is viewed by its supporters as crucial to the survival of the big city. They believe it will reduce social and economic decay, crime and white and business flight to the suburbs. It will foster residential and school integration and improve the quality of the schools. The opponents view forced city residency as a simplistic solution to a complex, unresolvable urban problem. They see it as a political play by city political leaders to sustain and increase their political power and tax base

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*The Illinois State legislature recently passed a law making the residency ruling for teachers unconstitutional. HB113, passed May 5, 1977.

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via control over political patronage and voters, particularly those who are employed by the city. "It smacks of the serfdom system practiced during the Middle Ages and the mining and factory-owned company stores prevalent several decades ago.

The ruling makes sense for policemen and firemen who must respond immediately to emergencies, but not for other public employees -- city administrators, clerks, and technicians. Nor does it make sense for city teachers for whom there are no emergencies.

The argument that it reduces commuting time is also weak. In many cases it takes less time to travel from a suburb to a city job than to commute crosstown. Since the majority of teachers do not or would not live in the inner city neighborhood in which they teach, economy in commuting time is not a rational argument for the residency ruling.

Procedure of Study

However, little is known about how teachers and school administrators really feel about the residency ruling. The writer surveyed 185 teachers and administrators to determine their opinion of the Chicago residency requirement. They were administered a 17 - item questionnaire. The sample, taken from six graduate courses for inservice teachers at a local university, included 156 (84%) teachers and 29 (16%) administrators and supervisors of which 66 (33%) were white, 103 (56%) black, 20 (11%) Latino, seventy (38%) male and 115 (62%) female. One hundred and thirty-five (73%) lived in the city and 50 (27%) in the suburb.

Overall Findings

The findings show a slight majority of school faculty (52% for and 42% against) favored the residency ruling. On the other hand, a majority (45% no, 34% yes) felt the requirement was not crucial to the survival of the city. Neither did the majority think it would reduce crime and economic decay, flight to the suburb by businesses, increase residential integration or school segregation nor increase the quality of education of city schools. However, 51 percent thought it would reduce white flight from the city.

Although a slight majority favored city residency for school employees, an even larger majority (60% to 40%) believed the ruling was unconstitutional, it violated their civil rights, it restricted their freedom to reside (64%) where they wished, 58 percent (yes) to 17 percent (no) felt it was a political ploy by city politicans to keep voters and taxpayers in the city.

The findings showed that only 33 percent of school faculty lived in the community in which they taught, while 67 percent lived outside. When asked whether they would live in the school community, 46 percent said yes, 39 percent no.

Job security and the teacher surplus appeared to influence their responses to "If you lived in a suburb would you move into the city if the residency ruling were instituted for teachers?" Forty-five percent said yes, 29 percent no, 26 per-

cent don't know. Similarly, their response to "Would you quit the Chicago Board of Education if the residency ruling were mandated rathe than move into or forced to remain in the city?" Twenty-one percent stated they would quit, whereas 44 percent said no, 35 percent did not know.

Their responses were more influenced by the positions they held in the school system, their ethnicity, sex and place of residence, than whether or not they were parents of school-age children and years of teaching.

Teachers and Administrators

More teachers (46% yes, 44% no) than administrators (27% yes, 55% no) favored the residency ruling. Thirty-two percent of teachers. but only 18 percent of administrators felt it was crucial to city survival. Except for reducing white flight (teacher 53% yes and administrators 46% yes), majority of both teachers and administrators rejected the idea that forced city residency would reduce crime, economic decay, business flight to suburbs, or increase, residential and school integration and the quality of education. On the crime issue only 11 percent of teachers and no administrators felt it would be reduced, whereas 71 percent of teachers and 55 percent of administrators stated it would not reduce crime in the city.

Majority of teachers (46%) and administrators (55%) agreed also on the unconstitutionality of the ruling. An overwhelming majority (teachers 65%, administrators 90%) felt it restricted their freedom of movement. They were also in agreement (teachers 58%, administrators 55%) that it violated their civil rights, and 59 percent of teachers and 72 percent of administrators felt the residency ruling was a political ploy to control Chicago voters and taxpayers.

Only 29 percent of teachers and 45 percent of administrators lived in the school community in which they worked. However, 47 percent of teachers and only 36 percent of teachers would live in the community their school is located. When it came to moving from suburb to city more teachers (47%) than administrators (18%) would move back into the city. Sixty-four percent of administrators were unsure, while 18 percent stated no in contrast to 29 percent of the teachers rejecting and 25 percent not knowing whether they would move to the city if required. These data are supported by their response to whether or not they would quit the Chicago Board of Education, if forced to relocate in the city. Only 21 percent of teachers and 10 percent of administrators indicated they would give up their jobs, while 46 percent and 26 percent of teachers and administrators, respectively, stated they would <u>not</u>. However, 34 percent of teachers and 64 percent of administrators were ambivalent as to whether or not they would quit.

Ethnicity:

The trend in the responses toward favoring the residency requirement was definitely influenced by the ethnicity of the school faculty. Sixty-four percent of black and 62 percent of latino school staff favored the residency ruling, while only 23 percent of white staff favored and 70 percent opposed it. Fifty percent of blacks, 30 percent of latinos and only 15 percent of whites thought city residency for teachers was crucial to city survival. The disparity in response of blacks, latinos and whites is probably influenced by the increased opportunities for residential mobility for whites as compared to blacks and latinos, influenced by economic and integration considerations. Whites can more readily leave one neighborhood for another or move to a suburb more easily than minorities.

However, majority of blacks (58%) and whites (82%) agreed that crime would not be reduced, nor did latinos (54%) believe it would. They also agreed flight of business would not be slowed down (whites 60%, blacks 68%), while 62 percent of latinos thought it would.

They, however, disagreed on the residency requirements affect on curtailing economic decay (whites 69% no to 18% yes; blacks 39% no to 34% yes; latinos 47% yes to 30% no). They disagreed on its influence on residency and school integration and quality of education, as shown in Table I.

Table I

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT WILL	Whites		Blacks		Latinos	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Increase residency integration	38%	59%	80%	08%	62%	23%
Increase school integration	31%	59%	58%	06%	62%	07%
Increase quality of schooling	26%	60%	53%	34%	47%	15%

The positive responses by blacks and latinos may indicate that their support for the city residency is influenced by their hope or belief that it will increase the quality of city life through integration. This is sustained by their thinking city economic decay will be reduced by a residency requirement.

In contrast, 41 percent of white and 54 percent of latino teachers, but only 24 percent of black teachers felt white flight from the city would decrease.

On the issues of unconstitutionality, freedom of movement, civil rights and machine politics, paradoxically a higher majority of blacks than whites and latinos felt their rights would be violated, except on the freedom of movement question, as shown in Table II.

Table II

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT	Whites		Blacks		Latinos	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. is unconstitutional.	70%	14%	88%	12%	52%	36%
2. restricts freedom of movement.	92%	06%	53%	19%	38%	47%
3. violates civil rights.	65%	20%	81%	18%	30%	47%
4. is a political ploy by city.	59%	31%	63%	22%	47%	15%

Perhaps, this shows blacks are more sensitive to violations of person liberty and civil rights than whites because of their history of social suppression and discrimination. On the other hand, the majority of latinos (except on the political ploy issue) did not regard the city residency requirement as being repressive. The latino teachers view the ruling more positively because they live in defacto segregated latino communities or neighborhoods by choice, rather than by social pressures. For example, the existence of Spanish bilingual-bicultural programs is dependent upon the neighborhood school concept. Another factor is that most Spanish bilingual teachers would rather teach in predominantly latino populated schools. This reasoning is supported by their 85 percent affirmative response to "Would

you live in the in-school community in which you teach?" Forty-nine percent of blacks answered yes to this question, while only 26 percent of white teachers gave a positive response (58% said no).

For various reasons (job security, fewer employment opportunities), majority of blacks (68%) and latinos (47%), as compared to whites (20%) stated they would move from suburb to city to retain their job with the Chicago Board of Education, if a city residency requirement were mandated. Their responses are sustained by 64 percent of whites and only 10 percent of blacks and 15 percent of latinos indicating they would "quit the Chicago Board of Education if the residency ruling were instituted and they lived in a suburb or were moving to a suburb.

These ethnic classified responses seem to show blacks and latinos are more committed to the cities than white teachers. It may indicate that white teachers have greater social, employment and residential mobility, and know it, than blacks and latinos, who have fewer options, and are aware of the limitations.

Residency-city/suburb:

Seventy-three percent (or 135) of the teachers lived in the city (to be referred to as C - teachers), and 27 percent (or 50) lived in a suburb (to be referred to as S- teachers). Ninety percent of the suburban residents were white, 9 percent black and 1 percent latino. The results indicate that place of residence influences school faculty's attitude toward city living and its schools.

Sixty-percent of C-teachers favored the city residency requirement as compared to only 6 percent of S-teachers believed the ruling to be crucial to city survival. They also disagreed that it would stem white flight (S-teachers 64% no; C-teachers 64% yes); increase community integration (S-teachers 74% no, C-teachers 63% no), increase school integration (S-teachers 74% no, C-teachers 49% yes); and increase quality of education (S-teachers 78% no, C-teachers 63% yes).

However, a majority of both C- and S-teachers agreed the residency ruling would not reduce crime, economic decay and business flight from the city. (Higher majority of S- than C-teachers).

They also agreed the requirement was unconstitutional (C-teachers 70%, S-teachers 78%); it restricted freedom of movement (C-teachers 62%, S-teachers 98%), and violated their civil rights (C-teachers 79%, S-teachers 94%). But, paradoxically, 70 percent of C-teachers did not (15% did) feel the residency ruling was a political ploy by city politicans, while 78 percent of S-teachers believe it was (12% did not).

As expected, 49 percent of C-teachers stated they would move from suburb to city (34% said they would not), and 80 percent of S-teachers indicated they would not (10% said they would) relocate to the city, if the ruling were instituted. The response to "Would you quit the Chicago Board of Education if the ruling were instituted. . ." followed the same predictable

pattern: Sixty-seven percent of C-teachers said no and 23 percent yes; sixty percent of S-teachers said yes and 20 percent no.

It would appear that those teachers who live in the city have more faith in the city being revitalized and becoming a better place in which to work and live than those who do not reside in the city.

However that commitment appears to be limited when it comes to living in certain areas (e.g., inner-city communities). Sixty-four percent of C-teachers and 80 percent of S-teachers stated they would not live in the school community in which they teach.

Other variables:

When the data were examined according to female and male responses, there were more agreements on the issues than disagreements. Forty percent males in contrast to 53 percent females favored the residency ruling (56% males, 34% females opposed it). The major reason for the more favorable response by females is the majority of females felt the residency requirement was critical to city survival; it would reduce economic decay, business and white flight and community segregation. Whereas the majority of males disagreed.

Although, both male and female respondents agreed the ruling was unconstitutional, violated civil rights, restricted freedom of movement and was a political ploy by the city government a greater majority of males than females responded in the affirmative.

Years of experience did not have any significant influence on the teachers' responses. Nei er did parenthood. The responses on the issues were basically the same as the total group response.

Conclusion

The findings show the minorities (blacks and latinos) and those who live in the city favor the residency ruling. The responses could be influenced by economic and social concerns. For example, the job market and residential mobility is more restrictive for minorities than whites; there is an over supply of educators in relation to demand and a tight money market coupled with high living costs and inflation that hinders people from making any major financial decisions. Job security considerations definitely influenced their responses.

Another factor is that those who live in the city (majority of whom were minorities) or see themselves as permanent residents of the city, may have a greater commitment to improving it. (Perhaps minorities cannot or do not view themselves as potential suburbanites.) The majority of minorities and city dwellers view the residency ruling as, perhaps, a panacea or at least crucial to the survival of the city.

The city dwellers hope it will stem the tide of white and business flight to the suburbs and economic decay, promote integration and increase the quality of education. The latinos agree on all these issues; blacks agreed with latinos with the

exception of reduction of white and business flight. The city dwellers, the minorities, want everyone who works in the city to live in the city.

What is paradoxical is that neither the city dwellers nor the minorities thought it would reduce crime in the city. All groups also believed the ruling to be unconstitutional, restrictive and a violation of their civil rights, yet minorities and city dwellers favored mandated residency if one worked for the city government. On the other hand a higher percentage of blacks (63%) as compared to whites (59%), to latinos (47%) saw the ruling as a political ploy by city hall. However, only 15 percent of city dwellers, while an overwhelming majority (78%) of suburbanites viewed it as a political scheme to control city employees.

Although the Chicago teacher sample is rather small, nevertheless it closely represents the ethnic composition of the Chicago faculty -- 50 percent white, 45 percent black and 5 percent latino. The findings indicate that the city residency issue is controversial. Faculty members are either ambivalent or disagree on the issues. Their attitudes are influenced by their job position, ethnicity, and place of residence. Possibly the most overwhelming influential factor for all groups are job security, tight job market and inflationary economic conditions. For minorities, their responses are further conditioned by fewer opportunities and restricted residential mobility than are those of the majority.

If these factors were not prevalent, the vast majority of teachers would probably reject the city residency requirement. Whether or not the findings of this study are applicable to other large cities will have to wait for research.